

Abner Cloud House
Between Canal Road &
C&O Canal, NW
National Park Reservation 404
Washington, DC

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC

Addendum to:
Abner Cloud House
Between Canal Road &
C & O Canal, NW
National Park Reservation 404
Washington, D. C.

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ABNER CLOUD HOUSE

Location: Between Canal Road and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in Washington, D. C., N. W. Near "Fletcher's Boat House." This is near the intersection of Reservoir Road and Canal Road, National Park Reservation No. 404.

Present Owner: The National Park Service

Present Use: Storage

Brief Statement of Significance: This is an early 18th Century Miller's House which played a part in the history of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Abner Cloud house was built in about 1801 as the residence of a second generation miller. Cloud, who had his mill a few hundred yards west of the Maddox Branch, on the Potomac River side of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, was the son of a Chester County Pennsylvania miller. The mill was used as late as 1869 by D. L. Shoemaker.

The two and a half story stone structure has a gable roof and is sited on a hill which opens the basement out on the grade level next to the C and O Canal. The style could be said to be a utilitarian Georgian. At various times the house was changed. Some of the most significant alterations occurred with the addition of porches which surrounded the first floor of the house and covered the front of the house at the second floor level. Extra doors were cut through on the first and second floor to give access to the porches. These porches were removed in June of 1962 by the National Park Service due to their high rate of deterioration.

In the 1960's the National Park Service began plans to rehabilitate the Abner Cloud House and to restore it to its original condition on the exterior. In its original exterior condition the house would

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give the same appearance as the house had while the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was in operation. This would fit the Abner Cloud House into the general restoration of the Canal by the National Park Service.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The Abner Cloud House is a two and a half story stone house with a gable roof and located on a hill near the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in Washington, D. C. The building is of a simple square utilitarian Georgian town house type, even though it is in the country. The house was built as the residence of the miller, Abner Cloud, and has been maintained as a residence for most of its life.

The entire exterior is field stone and the building was equipped at one time with double hung windows, which were later replaced by two over two light double hung windows. These were equipped with exterior blinds.

Due to the slope of the site the rear of the house is one floor lower than the front, which allows the basement to open on grade. A retaining wall in front of the house holds Canal Road up, slightly above the house. There is no landscaping surrounding the house in the typical residential sense, but only moderate natural trees and grass.

The roof of the Abner Cloud House is of corrugated metal, which is not original. The house has one single chimney on its north end which handles fireplaces in all of the major rooms.

For one period of its history the house was surrounded on the first floor level by porches, but these were not original. The front of the house had a porch on the second floor also. These porches were of simple post and beam construction with railings and baluster. The center window on the second floor of the front of the house was enlarged into a door and there was a door added to the rear of the first floor. These porches were removed by the National Park Service in the 1960's.

The main front door of the house is a six panel wooden door with a transom above. This transom has only one large sheet of glass. Both the door and the windows on the front of the house appear to be of the same style and not original. The rear basement door also has a transom that appears to have been altered.

The interior of the Abner Cloud house was finished in the basement and on the first and second floors. The attic floor, however, was not finished. In plan there are two rooms to a floor and a hall with stairway running across the south side of the house.

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The basement has one large room that is finished in a utilitarian manner with a large stone fireplace, whose opening is of such a size that it could have been used for cooking. This fireplace is flanked on one side by the remnants of a glass fronted cabinet. To the rear of this room is a smaller room that is strictly utilitarian.

The first floor contains two primary rooms and the stair hall, all of which are plastered and trimmed. The two rooms have chair rails and the front room has a mantelpiece in place which is flanked by a pair of glass fronted cabinets. The mantel is wood with a rather simple, but elegant pair of pilasters supporting a molded shelf. The cabinets use much the same treatment of elements and trim as the fireplace. The base section of the cabinets has panel doors which are topped by the line of the window sills and the chair rail. On top of the bases are arch topped glass doors flanked by pilasters and finished off with a wooden keystone. The interiors of all window frames are paneled.

The second floor is layed out much the same as the first floor and the trim is similar. The mantels on the second floor, however, are missing. The third floor is floored, but otherwise unfinished.

The house has a minimal amount of electrical service and no plumbing or heating. The building is in general in rather shabby condition, but is in no structural danger.

The building is surrounded by parking area and wild grass and overlooks the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Across the canal is a boat rental establishment, called Fletcher's Boat House, and beyond that is the Potomac River. This area is a park or recreation area.

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